(c) if so, the reasons therefor and why long loops were built in Northern and not in South Eastern Railway and why 9000 tonne trains were stopped in South Eastern Railway; and

(d) if not, the details of the actual costs and losses and details of the 9000 tonne train operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) Yes Sir. Long loops were constructed at Gaipura, Malwan, Kaurara & Dankaur to accommodate 9000 tonnes Heavy haul trains at the cost of Rs. 3.05 Cr. which were run on a trial measure. The loops were used during the trial.

(b) to (d). Two sets of Radio Remote Control equipment were procured at a cost of US $ 1,310,373. Trials were conducted between Kiriburu-Bokaro section of South Eastern Railway. The technical feasibility of use of such a system was established but due to operational and maintenance problems, the trials were not extended. It is not true that 9000 tonne trains had to be stopped because of non-availability of long loops in South Eastern Railway.

Private Courier Companies

2893. SHRI UDDHAB BARMAN : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of licences issued to private courier companies during the last three years;

(b) the details of their turn-over during the above period;

(c) the details of turn-over of Department of Posts, EMS wing for the above period; and

(d) the steps taken by the Government for the efficiency improvement of EMS Wing?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The Department of Post does not issue licences to private courier companies.

(b) Does not arise in view of the above.

(c) The turnover of Speed Post during the last three years is as under:

Year	Turnover (in crores)
1993-94	50.13
1994-95	54.18
1995-96	57.40

(d) The following steps have been taken to improve the efficiency of Speed Post Service:

(i) Improved responsiveness to customer needs in the matter of picking up and delivery of Speed Post articles.

(ii) Rationalisation of procedure in Speed Post Centres to make them more customer oriented & to ensure expeditious handling of Speed Post articles.

(iii) Introduction of Track and Trace system to cover National Speed Post Centres in phased manner.

(iv) Computerisation of Transit Mail Offices for Speed Post offices in big cities.

(v) Training & upgrading the skills of staff deployed in Speed Post Centres.

(vi) Better marketing of Speed Post Services by organising customer meets and publicity.

Distribution of Postal Dak

2894. SHRI JAI PRAKASH (HARDOI) : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item captioned "Sorting their own mail" appearing in the 'Tribune' dated September 19, 1996;

(b) if so, the facts thereof;

(c) the action taken by the Government thereon;

(d) the number of cases where the postal mail was found dumped undistributed in Delhi in the last one year: and

(e) the action taken against the guilty staff of the postal department?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There was an instance of irregular delivery of mails in beat No. 25, Charan Bagh locality, of Patiala Head Post Office in September 1996. The regular postman of that beat went on medical leave and some ad-hoc arrangement was made for delivery of mails in the absence of that postman. The residents of Charan Bagh locality approached the Postman for non-delivery of their mails and the latter handed over the malls to them in the Head Post office itself for furthei distribution without bringing it to the notice of the Delivery Assistant or the Assistant Postmaster (Delivery).

(c) The Chief Postmaster General, Punjab Circle has got the matter enquired into. It was found that improper arrangement of postmen staff and ineffective supervision by the Assistant Postmaster (Delivery) led to the incident.

The officiating arrangement in the leave vacancy was revised and the accumulated mails got delivered by September 20, 1996, Disciplinary action has been taken against two Postal Assistants and three Postmen found guilty. Four of the officials at fault have been shifted from their positions.